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ABSTRACT

From September 1991 to June 1992, the General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service conducted a national survey of adults who took the GED Tests in Canada. The purpose of the study was to describe background characteristics, experiences, attitudes, and expectations of adults who took the GED Test. Findings indicated that the average age of adults who took the GED Test was 30; most were between the ages of 25 and 44. More than four in five were white and one in seven was nonwhite, similar to their proportions among all Canadians. Nearly two in three had completed the 10th grade or higher before leaving school. Their most important reasons for not completing school fell into six categories: critical judgments about school, home and family problems, marriage or pregnancy, employment-related reasons, social behavior, and academic problems. Nearly 9 in 10 candidates reported that they reviewed or studied in some way before they wrote the GED Tests. On average, Canadians studied for a total of 60 hours before taking the GED Tests, twice the amount of time reported by GED candidates in the United States. Nearly half (48 percent) reported they were employed for pay. Two in five reported household incomes, in Canadian dollars, of less than $20,000 per year. One in three planned to enroll in a two- or four-year college or university during the next year. Includes 13 tables and 3 figures. (appendixes contain 14 references, methodology, survey form, and survey administration information.) (YLB)

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# GED CANDIDATES IN CANADA

A REPORT ON

## THE 1992 CANADIAN CANDIDATE SURVEY

Janet Baldwin
Sen Qi

American Council on Education
Center for Adult Learning
and Educational Credentials
GED Testing Service



A GED PROFILE
RESEARCH REPORT

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# Introduction

The Tests of General Educational Development (GED) provide adults who did not complete high school with an opportunity to earn a high school credential. Many adults who dropped out of school before completion continue their learning through formal adult education classes, self-study, distance learning programs, or other means. By taking and passing a series of five tests in writing, social studies, science, interpreting literature and the arts, and mathematics, these adult demonstrate that they have acquired a level of learning that is comparable to that of recent high school graduates.

The GED Tests were first developed in 1942 to provide returning World War II veterans who had not earned a high school diploma prior to entering military service with an opportunity to earn a high school credential. The purpose of the GED Tests, essentially unchanged for the past fifty years, is to measure the outcomes and concepts of a four-year program of high school education in the core content areas of United States and Canadian high school curricula. Recognized nationwide in the U.S. and Canada by employers and institutions of higher learning, the GED program has increased education and employment opportunities for millions of adults since 1942.

The General Educational Development (GED) Program in Canada began in 1969 when the province of Nova Scotia requested and was granted permission to administer the GED Tests to assess the achievements of adults who lacked formal educational qualifications (Quigley, 1987). Since that time, the Canadian GED program has expanded to include both territories and all provinces except Ontario and Quebec. Each year, more than 20,000 adults write the GED Tests in Canada. In 1992, 22,915 wrote the GED Tests in Canada (Table 1), an 8 percent increase over the number writing in the previous year (GED Testing Service, 1993); more than 20,000 were tested in 1993. During the 25 years of the Canadian program's history, more than 250,000 adults have earned high school graduation credentials based on passing the GED Tests (Table 2).

Despite the program's growth, relatively little is known about the backgrounds and experiences of persons who write the GED Tests in Canada. The Canadian GED Survey was designed to provide information for administrators, program directors, adult education teachers, researchers, policy makers, and the public about this important and growing segment of Canada's adult learner population.

During the ten-month period from September 1991 to June 1992, the GED Testing Service conducted a national survey of adults who took the GED Tests in Canada. The survey, which targeted all GED candidates in Canada, was undertaken in cooperation with the ministries and departments responsible for adult education in eight provinces and the two territories in Canada.[1] This survey is the first cross-jurisdictional study of GED examinees ever conducted in the 25-year history of the GED program in Canada.

[1] These jurisdictions include Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, and Yukon Territory. Ontario and Quebec do not participate in the Canadian GED program; therefore, they were not included in the survey.

The purpose of the study was to describe the background characteristics, experiences, attitudes, and expectations of adults who took the GED Tests in Canada. The results will provide GED Administrators and Chief Examiners with information that can be used to improve services to GED examinees. Additionally, the survey information is intended to help educators and policy makers find more effective ways to help adults without high school credentials meet their educational and employment goals.

This report is presented in six sections: Section I, Demographic Background Characteristics; Section II, Schooling and Study Experiences; Section III, Employment Experiences; Section IV, Academic and Employment Goals; Section V, A Profile of the Typical Canadian GED Candidate; and Section VI, Implications. The survey methods, sample, survey form, and administration procedures are described in the appendices.

Throughout the report, tables and graphs are presented to illustrate findings and to summarize data. Comparisons with the population of GED candidates in Canada are based on data from the GED *1992 Statistical Report* (GED Testing Service, 1993) for persons 17 and older, unless otherwise noted.[2] Comparisons with the Canadian population of adults without a diploma are based on data from the Canadian Census of 1991 (Statistics Canada, 1993a) for persons ages 15 and older, not in school, and lacking a secondary school graduation certificate or further training.[3]

[2] The Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education, the policy board for the GED Testing Service, requires that persons be at least 16 years of age in order to take the GED Tests. The age eligibility for taking the GED Tests in participating Canadian jurisdictions is 19, with two exceptions. In Alberta and Northwest Territories, the age eligibility is 18. Occasionally these age eligibility requirements may be waived to permit testing at age 17.

[3] 1991 Canada Census, Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 93-315.

Table 1
Number of Persons Writing the GED Tests in Canada: 1969–1993

| Year | AB | BC | MB | NB | NF | NT | NS | PE | SK | YT | CM* | Year Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1969 | | | | | | | 592 | | | | | 592 |
| 1970 | | | | | | | 4,554 | | 361 | | | 4,915 |
| 1971 | | | | | | | 2,341 | 197 | 2,475 | | | 5,013 |
| 1972 | | | 878 | | | | 1,492 | 354 | 2,003 | | | 4,727 |
| 1973 | | 1,193 | 4,992 | | | | 1,734 | 248 | 1,532 | | | 9,699 |
| 1974 | | 3,121 | 2,191 | | 651 | | 1,735 | 297 | 1,508 | | | 9,503 |
| 1975 | | 3,603 | 2,378 | 262 | 477 | 29 | 1,799 | 276 | 2,219 | | | 11,043 |
| 1976 | | 3,527 | 2,584 | 528 | 1,157 | 95 | 2,026 | 290 | 1,933 | 11 | | 12,151 |
| 1977 | | 3,662 | 2,387 | 656 | 1,511 | 146 | 1,758 | 415 | 2,242 | 39 | | 12,816 |
| 1978 | | 3,931 | 2,036 | 103 | 1,142 | 133 | 2,289 | 281 | 2,554 | 44 | | 12,513 |
| 1979 | | 3,556 | 1,641 | 1,065 | 1,099 | 133 | 1,856 | 177 | 2,675 | 63 | | 12,265 |
| 1980 | | 5,015 | 1,629 | 1,277 | 1,501 | 144 | 2,530 | 359 | 2,959 | 85 | | 15,499 |
| 1981 | 443 | 4,929 | 1,771 | 1,643 | 1,521 | 99 | 2,847 | 400 | 3,343 | 124 | | 17,115 |
| 1982 | 2,288 | 5,068 | 1,866 | 1,784 | 1,540 | 127 | 2,519 | 338 | 3,249 | 143 | | 18,922 |
| 1983 | 2,897 | 4,250 | 1,359 | 1,609 | 1,541 | 120 | 2,730 | 276 | 3,747 | 96 | | 18,625 |
| 1984 | 3,095 | 3,969 | 1,506 | 1,638 | 876 | 86 | 2,041 | 201 | 2,969 | 75 | | 16,456 |
| 1985 | 3,391 | 3,300 | 1,575 | 1,680 | 730 | 122 | 2,641 | 183 | 2,635 | 150 | | 16,407 |
| 1986 | 2,941 | 3,898 | 1,663 | 2,438 | 606 | 110 | 2,391 | 193 | 2,538 | 53 | 98 | 16,929 |
| 1987 | 4,336 | 4,366 | 1,968 | 2,536 | 652 | 120 | 2,349 | 225 | 3,122 | 60 | 161 | 19,895 |
| 1988 | 3,811 | 5,703 | 2,096 | 2,661 | 743 | 114 | 2,877 | 205 | 2,439 | 45 | 165 | 20,859 |
| 1989 | 3,886 | 4,507 | 2,139 | 2,721 | 1,142 | 134 | 2,672 | 320 | 2,831 | 87 | 120 | 20,559 |
| 1990 | 3,860 | 4,353 | 2,333 | 2,608 | 1,177 | 173 | 3,169 | 284 | 2,846 | 68 | 132 | 21,003 |
| 1991 | 3,437 | 4,815 | 2,290 | 2,229 | 1,161 | 195 | 3,796 | 290 | 2,819 | 70 | 209 | 21,311 |
| 1992 | 3,968 | 5,121 | 2,236 | 2,047 | 1,220 | 138 | 4,327 | 301 | 3,188 | 55 | 314 | 22,915 |
| 1993 | 3,462 | 5,170 | 2,096 | 2,028 | 1,096 | 178 | 4,251 | 266 | 2,672 | 114 | 267 | 21,600 |
| Total | 41,815 | 87,052 | 45,614 | 1,513 | 21,543 | 2,396 | 62,724 | 6,376 | 60,859 | 1,382 | 1,466 | 362,740 |

Notes: AB=Alberta, BC=British Columbia, MB=Manitoba, NB=New Brunswick, NF=Newfoundland, NT=Northwest Territories, NS=Nova Scotia, PE=Prince Edward Island, SK=Saskatchewan, YT=Yukon Territory, CM=Canadian Military

*The number of persons counted for Canadian Military were persons tested on military bases in Ontario and Quebec.

Source: GED Testing Service, American Council on Education

## Table 2
## Number of GED Credentials Issued in Canada: 1969–1993

| Year | AB | BC | MB | NB | NF | NT | NS* | PE | SK | YT | Year Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1969 | | | | | | | 516 | | | | 516 |
| 1970 | | | | | | | 3,784 | | 231 | | 4,015 |
| 1971 | | | | | | | 1,794 | 195 | 2,312 | | 4,301 |
| 1972 | | | 535 | | | | 1,143 | 315 | 1,799 | | 3,792 |
| 1973 | | 1,100 | 4,619 | | | | 835 | 217 | 1,452 | | 8,223 |
| 1974 | | 2,692 | 1,951 | | 469 | | 815 | 205 | 16 | 11 | 6,148 |
| 1975 | | 3,146 | 2,378 | 183 | 340 | 28 | 1,365 | 212 | 2,084 | 39 | 9,736 |
| 1976 | | 2,976 | 2,584 | 350 | 1,157 | 68 | 974 | 290 | 1,498 | 11 | 9,908 |
| 1977 | | 3,078 | 2,137 | 575 | 900 | 116 | 858 | 287 | 1,663 | 39 | 9,653 |
| 1978 | | 3,372 | 1,836 | 513 | 737 | 102 | 1,843 | 281 | 2,369 | 17 | 11,070 |
| 1979 | | 3,584 | 1,538 | 758 | 714 | 99 | 1,383 | 262 | 2,412 | 59 | 10,809 |
| 1980 | | 4,497 | 1,413 | 1,059 | 930 | 106 | 1,646 | 307 | 2,557 | 78 | 12,593 |
| 1981 | 377 | 4,370 | 1,652 | 1,274 | 927 | 81 | 1,862 | 395 | 2,861 | 99 | 13,898 |
| 1982 | 1,871 | 4,276 | 1,652 | 1,324 | 1,040 | 95 | 2,017 | 311 | 2,360 | 128 | 15,074 |
| 1983 | 2,101 | 3,401 | 1,019 | 1,118 | 1,145 | 105 | 2,019 | 170 | 2,390 | 92 | 13,560 |
| 1984 | 2,260 | 3,158 | 1,153 | 933 | 599 | 76 | 2,100 | 138 | 2,510 | 73 | 13,000 |
| 1985 | 2,323 | 2,984 | 1,231 | 1,095 | 467 | 118 | 2,088 | 153 | 2,316 | 72 | 12,847 |
| 1986 | 2,112 | 2,930 | 1,276 | 1,432 | 450 | 110 | 1,573 | 182 | 2,324 | 44 | 12,433 |
| 1987 | 3,204 | 3,474 | 1,482 | 1,763 | 535 | 65 | 1,856 | 206 | 1,751 | 36 | 14,372 |
| 1988 | 2,649 | 4,495 | 1,434 | 1,636 | 517 | 66 | 1,716 | 190 | 1,565 | 34 | 14,302 |
| 1989 | 2,355 | 3,118 | 1,431 | 1,513 | 677 | 90 | 1,494 | 254 | 1,618 | 42 | 12,592 |
| 1990 | 2,461 | 2,550 | 1,535 | 1,457 | 714 | 117 | 1,816 | 165 | 1,729 | 53 | 12,597 |
| 1991 | 2,397 | 3,258 | 926 | 1,274 | 677 | 144 | 2,115 | 164 | 1,808 | 51 | 12,814 |
| 1992 | 2,808 | 3,727 | 1,168 | 1,244 | 755 | 104 | 2,498 | 208 | 2,130 | 48 | 14,690 |
| 1993 | 2,354 | 3,591 | 1,122 | 1,217 | 743 | 123 | 2,428 | 171 | 1,677 | 81 | 13,507 |
| Total | 29,272 | 69,777 | 36,072 | 20,718 | 14,493 | 1,813 | 42,538 | 5,278 | 45,432 | 1,057 | 266,450 |

Notes: AB=Alberta, BC=British Columbia, MB=Manitoba, NB=New Brunswick, NF=Newfoundland, NT=Northwest Territories, NS=Nova Scotia, PE=Prince Edward Island, SK=Saskatchewan, YT=Yukon Territory

*The number of credentials issued in Nova Scotia since 1986 includes those awarded to persons who took and passed the tests on Canadian military bases in Ontario and Quebec.

Source: GED Testing Service, American Council on Education



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# Summary of Findings and Implications

## Demographic Background Characteristics

- The average age of adults who wrote the GED Tests in Canada in 1992 was 30, older than that of their U.S. counterparts, whose average age was 27. One in three (34 percent) candidates were under the age of 25. In the U.S., by contrast, nearly two in three (62 percent) fell into this age group.
- Most Canadian candidates (58 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 44 years, while only 32 percent of Canadian adults without a secondary school graduation certificate were in this age group. This finding suggests that the Canadian GED program is effectively targeting middle-aged adults without a diploma. By contrast, 8 percent of Canadian GED candidates were 45 or older, yet more than half (58 percent) of all Canadian adults without a secondary school credential were in this age group.
- More than four in five (86 percent) Canadian GED candidates were White and one in seven (14 percent) were non-White, similar to their proportions among all Canadians (88 percent and 12 percent, respectively). However, non-White GED candidates and non-White Canadians in the ten participating jurisdictions were represented in different proportions among the ethnic groups. For example, 1 percent of GED candidates reported they were of Asian ethnic origin, while 6 percent of the Canadian population in participating jurisdictions did so. By contrast, 9 percent of GED candidates reported they were of Aboriginal origin, yet only 3 percent of all Canadians in participating jurisdictions did so. According to the 1991 Canadian Census, nearly half a million Canadians were of Aboriginal origin. Of these, 71 percent reside in the ten jurisdictions participating in the GED program in Canada. The rest reside in Ontario and Quebec.
- Six percent of Canadian candidates surveyed reported that they had a disability. Among Canadian candidates with disabilities, the most prevalent disabilities reported were orthopedic disabilities (28 percent) or other health impairments (40 percent). Although an estimated 1,300 Canadian GED candidates in 1992 had disabilities, only 24 Canadian candidates in 1992 used special editions of the GED Tests—such as braille, large print, or audiocassette—and fewer than 70 special accommodations to standard testing conditions were granted for candidates with documented disabilities. **Policy makers and adult education program directors should consider expanding their efforts to inform candidates with disabilities of the availability of these special editions of the GED Tests as well as special testing accommodations, such as extended testing time, use of special reading or optical devices, alternative answer-recording methods, or other adaptations to standard testing conditions.**

## Schooling and Study Experiences

- Nearly two in three GED candidates in Canada (63 percent) had completed the 10th grade or higher before leaving school. More than half (55 percent) reported they earned grades of "mostly C" or better while in school. After leaving formal schooling, most Canadian candidates for the GED credential continued to develop their abilities through formal and informal study methods as well as through employment and life experience.

- Canadian candidates' most important reasons for not completing school fell into six categories: Critical Judgements About School, Home and Family Problems, Marriage or Pregnancy, Employment-Related Reasons, Social Behavior Problems, and Academic Problems. These six categories of reasons for leaving school are similar to those identified for candidates in the U.S. More than one in four Canadian candidates (28 percent) reported reasons related to Critical Judgements About School—such as wasn't happy in school, was bored, did not like school, poor teaching—as most important for leaving school. Nearly one in three (32 percent) U.S. candidates reported reasons in this category.

- Nearly nine in ten (88 percent) Canadian candidates reported that they reviewed or studied in some way before they wrote the GED Tests. Of candidates who studied, nearly half (48 percent) preferred formal methods, such as attending a GED review class or learning center. More than half (52 percent) chose informal methods, such as studying from a GED book or manual, taking the *Official GED Practice Tests*, or some other method. The proportions of Canadian candidates who studied for the GED Tests, and who studied by formal or informal methods, are similar to those found for candidates in the U.S. Candidates' choices of study methods may be shaped by access to and awareness of study programs, personal preferences, and other factors. **Program planners should consider these differences in candidates' study patterns and provide varied programs, flexible scheduling, and self-paced study options for adults.**

- On average, Canadian candidates studied for a total of 60 hours before taking the GED Tests, twice the amount of time reported by GED candidates in the U.S. Of candidates who studied, more than one in three (36 percent) in Canada and one in four (24 percent) in the U.S. studied for 100 hours or more. The difference between Canada and the U.S. in numbers of hours of study for the GED Tests may be accounted for by differences in age, perceived abilities, need to study, attitude toward study, opportunity to study, access to study materials, academic counselling, or some combination of factors. Moreover, passing standards in Canada are generally higher than in the U.S. Thus, Canadian candidates may study longer because they strive for a higher level of achievement. Nevertheless, the time Canadian candidates devote to studying for the GED Tests is notably longer than that of U.S. candidates. These issues warrant further study and are recommended for further research.

## Employment Experiences

- Nearly half (48 percent) of Canadian candidates reported they were employed for pay. Nearly one in three (32 percent) were unemployed but looking for work. The employment status of Canadian GED candidates in 1992 is nearly the same as for

U.S. GED candidates in 1989. Thus, about the same percentage of GED candidates in both Canada and the U.S. were in the workforce. Three in four employed Canadian GED candidates reported working full time in 1992, the same proportion as reported by U.S. candidates. Most Canadian candidates were employed in sales, service, and administrative support occupations (36 percent) and handler, labourer, or transportation occupations (17 percent).

- Two in five Canadian candidates (40 percent) reported household incomes, in Canadian dollars, of less than $20,000 per year. Thus, the GED Tests provide opportunities for educational advancement for a substantial portion of lower-income adults without a diploma. Nearly one in four (23 percent) reported household incomes of $40,000 or more per year.

## Academic and Employment Goals

- One in three (33 percent) Canadian candidates planned to enroll in a two-year or four-year college or university during the next year. An additional one in five (22 percent) planned to enroll in a technical, trade, or vocational school. Anecdotal evidence suggests that acceptance of GED credentials by postsecondary education institutions is not as widespread in Canada as it is in the U.S. **It will be important to identify all Canadian educational institutions that accept persons with GED credentials so this information can be provided to candidates seeking to continue their education beyond high school. In addition, adult educators should provide information about the academic abilities of Canadian GED credential holders to registrars and admissions officers of colleges and universities throughout Canada. Such information may improve access to postsecondary education institutions for these adults.**

- Three in ten (31 percent) Canadian candidates planned to get a job during the next year and one in five (19 percent) planned to change employers. Thus, about half of Canadian GED candidates anticipated finding a new employer during the next year.

## Discussion

- The percentage of adults in Canada without a high school credential in each participating jurisdiction ranged from a low of 22 percent (Yukon Territory) to a high of 42 percent (Newfoundland). Many of these adults live in remote areas, work irregular hours, and have family or other circumstances that hinder their return to formal schooling. For these adults, distance learning programs may provide important avenues for improving knowledge and skills needed in an increasingly competitive global economy.

# I. Demographic Background Characteristics

Candidates' demographic background characteristics included age, race or ethnic group, gender, marital status, country of origin, and disabling conditions.

## Age

- The average age of adults who wrote the GED Tests in Canada was 30.
- One in three candidates (34 percent) were between 17 and 24 years of age.
- Most candidates (58 percent) were between the ages of 25 and 44 years.
- Only 8 percent were 45 years of age or older.

### Table 3
### Canadian GED Candidates and Population of Adults Without a High School Diploma, by Age Group

| | GED Candidates | | Adults, Not in School, Without a Diploma or Further Training* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| 15 to 24** | 2,416 | 34 | 263,010 | 10 |
| 25 to 44 | 4,165 | 58 | 835,200 | 32 |
| 45 and older | 583 | 8 | 1,547,120 | 58 |
| Total | 7,164 | 100 | 2,645,330 | 100 |

*Ontario and Quebec are not included.
**In the GED survey sample, this category includes persons ages 17 and older.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education, and 1991 Canadian Census.

More than nine in 10 (92 percent) GED candidates in Canada were under the age of 45. According to the most recent Canadian Census, only 42 percent of Canadian adults without a secondary school graduation certificate were under the age of 45. This suggests that the Canadian GED program is effectively targeting both young and middle-aged adults without a diploma. By contrast, 8 percent of GED candidates were 45 or older, yet well over half (58 percent) of all Canadian adults without a diploma were in this age group. Although the 45 and older age group represents a large share of adults without a diploma, relatively few persons in this group wrote the GED Tests in Canada in 1992 (Table 3).

The age distribution of Canadian GED candidates differs from that of their U.S. counterparts. In 1992, the average age of U.S. candidates was 27 (GED Testing Service, 1993), compared with 30 for candidates in Canada. Further, most candidates in the U.S. (62 percent) are under 25 years of age. In Canada, only 34 percent fall in to this age group. Most Canadian candidates (58 percent) are between the ages of 25 and 44 (Figure 1; Table 3).

## Gender

- Men and women were nearly equally represented among Canadian candidates (51 percent are women; Table 4).

The equal proportion of men and women GED candidates corresponds to that of the Canadian population of out-of-school adults without a diploma or further training. Thus, the GED program is reaching men and women equally and in proportion to their representation in the population of adults without a secondary school diploma.

### Table 4
### Canadian GED Candidates and Population of Adults Without a High School Diploma, by Gender

| | GED Candidates* | | Adults, Not in School, Without a Diploma or Further Training* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Female | 4,093 | 51 | 1,344,345 | 51 |
| Male | 3,916 | 49 | 1,301,015 | 49 |
| Total | 8,009 | 100 | 2,645,360 | 100 |

*Ontario and Quebec are not included.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education, and 1991 Canadian Census

## Table 5
## Canadian GED Candidates and Canadian Population, by Ethnic Origin

| | GED Candidates* | | Population* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic Origin | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| White | 6,561 | 86 | 8,947,935 | 88 |
| Asian | 91 | 1 | 602,400 | 6 |
| Black | 65 | 1 | 38,085 | **0 |
| Aboriginal | 708 | 9 | 334,205 | 3 |
| Other | 222 | 3 | 284,070 | 3 |
| Total | 7,647 | 100 | 10,206,695 | 100 |

*Ontario and Quebec are not inluded.
**Less than 0.5 percent.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education, and 1991 Canadian Census.

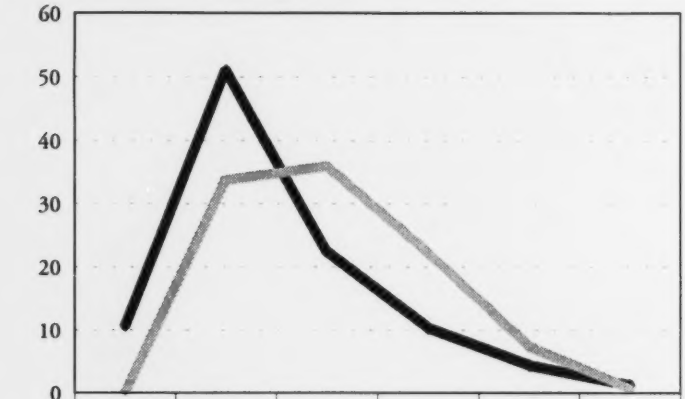
### Ethnicity

- More than four in five candidates (86 percent) were White.
- The rest were of Aboriginal origins (9 percent), Asian (1 percent), Black (1 percent) or other (3 percent).

Table 5 illustrates that nearly 9 in 10 candidates (86 percent) identified their ethnic background[4] as White, similar to the proportion of Whites among all Canadians (88 percent). The rate of GED participation by non-Whites (14 percent) was similar to their representation in the national population of Canadians (12 percent). The Canadian population data reported here exclude Ontario and Quebec. Nevertheless, when Ontario and Quebec are included, the percentage of Canadians who identify themselves as White is the same (88 percent). However, non-White candidates and non-White Canadians in the ten participating jurisdictions were represented in different proportions among the ethnic groups. For example, 1 percent of the GED candidates reported that they were of Asian ethnic origin, while 6 percent of the Canadian population in participating jurisdictions were of Asian origin. By contrast, 9 percent of GED candidates reported they were of Aboriginal origin, yet only 3 percent of all Canadians in participating jurisdictions did so. According to the most recent census, nearly half a million Canadians were of Aboriginal origin. Of these, 71 percent reside in the ten jurisdictions participating in the GED program in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1993c). The rest reside in Ontario and Quebec.

[4] For Canadian ethnic populations, "White" is estimated by subtracting Asian, Black, Aboriginal, and other origins from the total Canadian population. It includes British, French, European, and other multiple origins. "Asian" includes West Asian, South Asian, East, and Southeast Asian origins. "Black" includes African and Black origins. "Aboriginal" includes Metis and First Nations (Native, Indian, and Inuit). "Other" includes Arab origins, Pacific Islands origins, Latin, Central, and South American origins, Caribbean origins, and other origins.

## Figure 1
## Percent of GED Candidates in Canada and in the U.S., by Age Group




| | 17 and Under | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55 and Over |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 0.1 | 33.7 | 35.9 | 22.2 | 7.4 | 0.7 |
| U.S. | 10.7 | 50.9 | 22.4 | 10.3 | 4.4 | 1.2 |

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada and 1989 National Candidate Survey, American Council on Education

### Marital Status

- More than two in five candidates (44 percent) reported that they were married.
- One in three (34 percent) reported that they had never married.
- The rest reported that they were in common-law relationships (10 percent), divorced (7 percent), separated (5 percent), or widowed (1 percent).

Most GED candidates in Canada were either married or had never married. Relatively few (13 percent) were formerly married.

### Country of Origin

- Nearly all candidates were born in Canada (94 percent).
- The rest reported that they were from Europe (2 percent), the United Kingdom (1 percent), the United States (1 percent), or other places (2 percent).

## Disabling Conditions

- In 1992, 6 percent of Canadian candidates surveyed, or an estimated 1,300, reported that they had a disability.
- Of candidates with disabilities, nearly 3 in 10 (28 percent) reported they had orthopedic disabilities, the largest single category.
- More than one in seven (15 percent) had hearing impairments.
- Twelve percent reported that they had specific learning disabilities, 8 percent had emotional disabilities, and 7 percent had visual disabilities not correctable by glasses.
- Two percent reported "deafness," 2 percent reported "speech disability," and 40 percent reported "other health impairments."

Among Canadian candidates with disabilities, the most prevalent disabilities reported in 1992 were orthopedic disabilities and other health impairments. Other health impairments include arthritis, diabetes, or other chronic illnesses requiring medication. The large proportions of persons reporting these different disabilities are notable, suggesting that, for such individuals, the GED Tests provide important access to high school completion. Nevertheless, the percentage of persons reporting that they had a disabling condition may be underestimated because persons taking special editions of the GED Tests—such as braille, large print, or audiocassette—were not included in this survey.

Although an estimated 1,300 Canadian candidates had disabilities,[5] only 24 Canadian candidates in 1992 used special editions of the GED Tests and fewer than 70 special accommodations to standard testing conditions were granted to candidates with documented disabilities (GED Testing Service, 1993). **Policy makers and adult education program directors should consider expanding their efforts to inform candidates with disabilities of the availability of these special editions of the GED Tests as well as special testing accommodations—such as extended testing time, use of special reading or optical devices, alternative answer-recording methods, or other adaptations to standard testing conditions.**

[5] Estimate is based on 6 percent of the number of persons tested in Canada in 1992 (GEDTS, 1993).

# II. Schooling and Study Experiences

This section includes highest grade completed, grades in school, reasons for dropping out of school, GED study methods, hours of study, and preferred instructional method.

## Highest Grade Completed

- Nearly two in three GED candidates (63 percent) had completed the 10th grade or higher before leaving school.
- More than one in four (28 percent) had completed the 11th grade or higher.

## Grades in School

- More than half (55 percent) of the candidates reported they earned grades of "mostly C" or better while in school. About 12 percent reported they earned grades of "mostly B" or better.

Most Canadian candidates reported attaining relatively high levels of formal schooling before dropping out and most reported earning grades in school at satisfactory levels of "mostly C" or better. However, it is notable that Canadian candidates were less likely to report completing 10th grade or higher (63 percent) or 11th grade or higher (28 percent) than their U.S. counterparts (70 percent and 39 percent, respectively). Moreover, Canadian candidates were less likely to report earning grades in school of "mostly C" or better (55 percent) or "mostly B" or better (12 percent) than candidates in the U.S. (74 percent and 22 percent, respectively; Baldwin, 1990). It is not known whether these differences in highest grade completed and reported grades in school reflect differences in schooling, standards, or grading patterns in the two countries or real differences in academic achievement. After leaving formal schooling, most Canadian candidates for the GED credential continued to develop their abilities through formal and informal study methods as well as through employment and life experiences.

## Reasons for Not Completing School

Candidates were asked to respond to a list of 44 different reasons for not completing school. A factor analysis of their responses indicated that these reasons fell into six distinct categories, or clusters (Figure 2; Table 6). These categories were named to reflect the nature of the specific reasons included.

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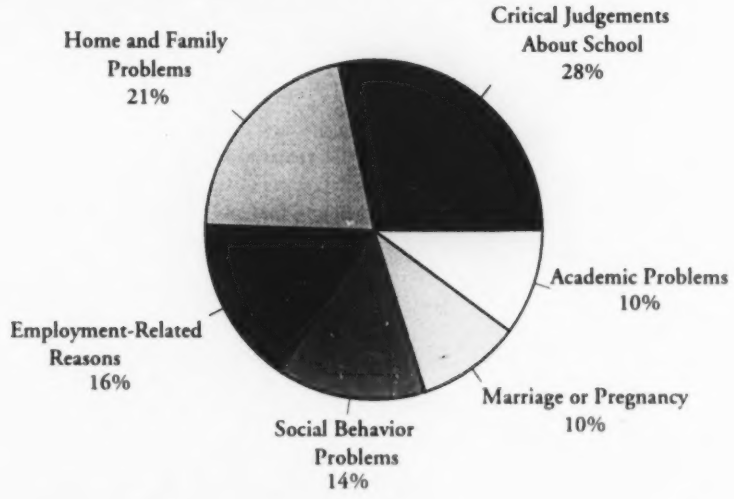
These six categories provided a simple framework for summarizing percentages of responses when candidates were asked to select the "most important" reasons for not completing school.

- Candidates' most important reasons for not completing school fell into these six categories: Critical Judgements About School, Home and Family Problems, Marriage or Pregnancy, Employment-Related Reasons, Social Behavior Problems, and Academic Problems (Figure 2).
- More than one in four candidates (28 percent) reported reasons related to Critical Judgements About School as most important.
- One in five (21 percent) reported Home and Family Problems as most important. An additional 1 in 10 (10 percent) reported leaving school due to Marriage or Pregnancy.
- One in six (16 percent) reported Employment-Related Reasons as most important for leaving school.
- For the remaining candidates, the most important reasons for not completing school were related to Social Behavior Problems (14 percent) and Academic Problems (10 percent).

## Figure 2
## Canadian Candidates' Most Important Reasons For Not Completing High School, in Percents


Critical Judgements About School 28%
Home and Family Problems 21%
Academic Problems 10%
Employment-Related Reasons 16%
Marriage or Pregnancy 10%
Social Behavior Problems 14%

**Source: Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education**

## Table 6
## Canadian GED Candidates' Most Important Reasons for Not Completing High School, in Percents

| | GED Candidates* | |
|---|---|---|
| Reason Category | Frequency | Percent** |
| Critical Judgements About School | 1,503 | 28 |
| Home and Family Problems | 1,102 | 21 |
| Employment-Related Reasons | 879 | 16 |
| Social Behavior Problems | 767 | 14 |
| Marriage or Pregnancy | 563 | 10 |
| Academic Problems | 557 | 10 |
| Total | 5,371 | 99 |

*Ontario and Quebec are not included.
**Due to rounding error, percents may not sum to 100.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education

It is notable that the categories identified from a factor analysis of the responses of Canadian GED candidates (Table 7) are similar to the categories identified from a factor analysis of the responses of GED candidates in the United States. A recent study of U.S. GED candidates' reasons for not completing high school (Baldwin, 1991) identified seven categories, two of which—Disengagement from School and Shortcomings of the School—comprise reasons that, in general, correspond to a single category in the Canadian study, Critical Judgements About School. The remaining five categories comprise, generally, the same reasons in both the U.S. and the Canadian studies.[6]

The reasons for leaving school are interrelated and complex, and may be difficult to identify at the time students decide to leave. Although no one reason can account for all the conditions, motives, and circumstances that characterize a person's decision to terminate formal schooling, it is useful to consider the extent to which such reasons represent barriers to further educational achievement. Nevertheless, GED candidates, though former school leavers, have elected to earn their high school credentials. They represent a self-selected portion of the high school dropout population. Thus, their attitudes and perceptions may differ in important ways from those of other dropouts.

In Canada and in the U.S., about half of GED candidates (49 percent and 50 percent, respectively) reported reasons related to Critical Judgements About School[7] or Home and Family Problems as most important for leaving school. Candidates in Canada were more likely than those in the U.S. to report reasons related to Social Behavior Problems (14 percent versus 8 percent) and Academic Problems (10 percent versus 6 percent) as most important. Canadian candidates were less likely than their U.S. counterparts to report, as most important, reasons related to Marriage or Pregnancy (10 percent versus 20 percent).

[6] The category Social Behavior Problems in the Canadian study also included three reasons categorized in the U.S. study as related to Disengagement from School. These reasons are: "Was absent too many times," "Social life was more important than school work," and "Could not adjust to school routine." The Academic Problems category in the Canadian study includes the reason "Poor study habits." In the U.S. study, this reason was associated with the category Disengagement from School.

[7] Critical Judgements About School comprise reasons reported, generally, in two categories in the U.S. study: Disengagement from School and Shortcomings of the School (Baldwin, 1991).

## Table 7
## Reasons Canadian GED Candidates Gave for Not Completing High School, in Categories Derived from Factor Analysis

| Critical Judgements About School | Social Behavior Problems |
|---|---|
| *Wasn't happy in school** | *Had problems with drugs* |
| *Was bored** | *Had problems with alcohol* |
| *Did not like school** | *Was absent too many times* |
| *Poor teaching* | *Had problems with the law/police* |
| *Did not get along with teachers* | *Got suspended/expelled* |
| *Did not feel part of the school* | *Social life more important than school work* |
| *Teachers did not help me enough*** | *Could not adjust to school routine* |
| *Wasn't learning anything* | *School official told me to leave* |
| School did not offer the courses I wanted | |
| Not enough vocational/technical courses | **Academic Problems** |
| Did not get along with other students | *Poor test scores* |
| Classes were too easy | *Poor grades* |
| | *School work was too hard* |
| **Home and Family Problems** | *Homework was too hard* |
| *Family problems* | *Classes were too hard* |
| *Lacked a good place to study at home* | *Had trouble with math* |
| *Parents did not support my education* | *Poor study habits* |
| *Had emotional problems* | *Had trouble with reading* |
| *Didn't have enough money to go to school* | Had trouble understanding English |
| Personal/family illness | Too old for my grade |
| Was needed at home to care for sibling(s) | |
| Family moved too often | ***Employment-Related Reasons*** |
| | *Job took too much time* |
| **Marriage or Pregnancy***** | *Couldn't work and study at the same time* |
| Got married | *Got a job* |
| Got pregnant/made someone pregnant | *Needed money to help out at home* |

Note: Reasons are listed in order of their association to the category, from strongest to weakest. Italicized type indicates reasons that are strongly related to the category (factor loading .40 or higher).

*"Wasn't happy in school," "Was bored," and "Didn't like school" related also, though less strongly, to the Social Behavior Problems category.
**"Teachers did not help me enough" related also to the Academic Problems category. As this statement logically relates to critical judgements about the school experience, which can influence academic problems, it is placed here for purposes of this analysis.
***Reasons related to marriage and pregnancy were weakly associated with the category Home and Family Problems, but these relationships were not statistically significant. Because these reasons are important in their own right, they are reported in a separate category.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada



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The percentage reporting Employment-Related Reasons as most important was about the same in Canada and in the U.S. (16 percent and 15 percent, respectively).

Because Canadian GED candidates are, on average, older than candidates in the U.S., age differences may account for some of the differences in reported reasons for leaving school. However, it is not known to what extent these age differences reflect the moderating effects of memory, time, or maturation, or if they represent real differences in reasons for leaving school.

## Study Methods

Candidates were asked to indicate whether they reviewed or studied in any way for taking the GED Tests. These ways included formal methods, such as attending a GED study class or a learning center, or informal methods, such as taking the *Official GED Practice Tests*, studying from a GED book or manual, working with a tutor or family member, or some other method. Candidates who reported studying were asked to report their primary method of preparation for the GED Tests.

- Nearly nine in ten candidates (88 percent) reported that they reviewed or studied in some way before they wrote the GED Tests.
- Only 12 percent reported that they did not study.
- Of candidates who studied, nearly half (48 percent) preferred formal methods such as attending a GED review class (40 percent) or a learning center (8 percent).
- More than half of those who studied (52 percent) chose informal methods such as studying from a GED book or manual (41 percent), taking the *Official GED Practice Tests* (6 percent), or some other method (5 percent).
- Among the candidates who did not study before taking the GED Tests, the most frequently reported reasons for not studying were "did not feel I needed to review" (24 percent) or "was not aware of study classes" (26 percent).

The proportions of Canadian candidates who studied for the GED Tests, and who studied by formal or informal methods, are similar to those found for candidates in the U.S. Candidates' choices of study methods may be shaped by access to and awareness of study programs, personal preferences, and other factors. **Program planners should consider these differences in candidates' study patterns and provide varied programs, flexible scheduling, and self-paced study options for adults.**

## Hours of GED Study

- On average, candidates studied about 9 hours per week, for about 7 weeks, or a total of 60 hours before taking the GED Tests.[8]
- Of candidates who studied, more than one in three (36 percent) studied for 100 hours or more.

The median number of hours Canadian GED candidates reported studying (60) is twice the median number of hours (30) reported by GED candidates in the U.S. (Baldwin, 1990). Of candidates who studied, more than one in three (36 percent) in Canada and one in four (24 percent) in the U.S. studied for 100 hours on more. The difference between Canada and the

[8] A candidate's total number of hours is calculated by multiplying the reported number of hours studied per week by the reported number of weeks studied. The median number of hours per week, weeks, and total hours studied were used to estimate averages.

U.S. in numbers of hours of study for the GED Tests may be accounted for by differences in perceived abilities, need to study, attitude toward study, opportunity to study, access to study materials, academic counselling, or some combination of factors. The older ages of Canadian candidates may also be a factor. For example, older candidates, having been away from formal schooling for longer periods of time, may feel they need to study longer before writing the GED Tests. Moreover, the passing standards in Canada are generally higher than in the U.S. Thus, Canadian candidates may study longer because they strive for a higher level of achievement. Nevertheless, the time Canadian candidates devote to studying for the GED Tests, on average, is significantly longer than that of U.S. candidates. These issues warrant further study and are recommended topics for future research.

# III. Employment Experiences

This section describes candidates' employment status, hours worked per week, occupation, and income.

## Employment Status

- Nearly half (48 percent) of the candidates reported they were employed for pay. An additional 3 percent were employed, but not for pay.
- Nearly one in three (32 percent) were unemployed but looking for work.
- More than one in six (17 percent) were unemployed but not looking for work.

Candidates who were not employed and not looking for work gave three main reasons for their current status: nearly half (45 percent) were going to school, more than one in three (35 percent) reported having to take care of home or family, and one in ten (10 percent) were ill or disabled.

It is notable that the employment status of Canadian GED candidates in 1992 is nearly the same as that reported in a recent study of U.S. GED candidates (Baldwin and Spille, 1991). In the U.S. study, about half of the candidates were employed for pay; an additional 30 percent were unemployed and seeking jobs. Thus, about the same percentage (80 percent) of GED candidates in both Canada and the U.S. were in the workforce.

## Number of Hours Worked Per Week

- Nearly three in four employed candidates (74 percent) reported that they worked full time.
- More than one in four employed candidates (26 percent) reported working part time: 19 percent worked between 15 and 34 hours per week; only 7 percent worked fewer than 15 hours per week.

Employed candidates reported the number of hours per week they worked. Full-time employment was defined as working at least 35 hours per week. Three in four employed Canadian GED candidates reported working full-time in 1992, the same proportion as reported by U.S. candidates in 1989 (Baldwin and Spille, 1991).

## Table 8
## Percent of Canadian GED Candidates Reporting Current or Most Recent Job, by Occupational Category

| Occupational Category* | Percent** |
|---|---|
| Never worked | 1 |
| Administrative support (including clerical and related occupations) | 10 |
| Service occupations (including protective service, private household personnel, and other service) | 15 |
| Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations (including trapping, logging, horticulture, and animal husbandry) | 6 |
| Precision production, craft, and repair (including processing and product fabricating, assembling, and repairing occupations) | 5 |
| Machine operator, assembler, and inspection (including crafts and equipment operating, machining, and related occupations) | 5 |
| Transportation and material moving (including transport equipment operating occupations) | 5 |
| Handler, equipment cleaner, and labourer (including construction trades, material handling, and related occupations) | 12 |
| Military service member | 2 |
| Executive, administrative, and mangerial occupations (including proprietor and owner) | 4 |
| Professional specialty (including artist, engineer, musician, teacher, social worker, and writer) | 2 |
| Technicians and related support (including computer programmer, dental hygienist, legal assistant, and practical nurse) | 2 |
| Sales occupations (including cashier, insurance or real estate representative, and sales clerk) | 11 |
| Homemaker | 5 |
| Other | 14 |
| Total | 99 |

*Occupational categories were derived from analysis of U.S. Department of Labor classifications. Additional descriptions were derived from analysis of Candian standard occupational classifications.
**Due to rounding error, percent totals may not sum to 100.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education.

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## Occupation

- The current or most recent jobs of most candidates (53 percent) fell into the following four general occupational categories: handler/labourer and transportation (17 percent), service (15 percent), sales (11 percent), and administrative support (10 percent) occupations (Table 8).
- One in ten candidates (10 percent) reported that their current or most recent job was in production, craft and repair (5 percent) or machine operator (5 percent) occupations.
- Six percent reported having jobs in executive, administrative, managerial, and professional specialty occupations.
- Six percent held jobs in farming, forestry, and fishing occupations.

More than four in ten (42 percent) candidates reported that they were employed in sales, service, and administrative support occupations (36 percent) or in jobs involving executive, administrative, managerial, or professional specialties (6 percent). According to a recent study of the literacy levels of workers in the U.S. (Barton and Kirsch, 1990), young adults in such professions demonstrated average to high levels of literacy skills. Workers employed in labourer, transportation, production, or craft occupations demonstrated low levels of literacy skills. Although these occupations did not necessarily require the levels of literacy demonstrated by these employeees, it is notable that employees in different kinds of jobs demonstrated different levels of literacy. Further research is needed to explore in more depth the relationships between literacy abilities and occupational choice.

## Annual Household Income

- One in six candidates (17 percent) reported annual household incomes less than $10,000.
- About one in four (23 percent) reported annual household incomes between $10,000 and $19,999.
- More than one in three (37 percent) reported annual household incomes between $20,000 and $39,999 per year.
- About one in four (23 percent) reported annual household incomes of $40,000 or more.

Two in five Canadian candidates (40 percent) reported household incomes of less than $20,000 per year. This finding suggests that the GED Tests provide opportunities for educational advancement for a substantial portion of lower-income adults without a diploma. Nearly one in four reported household incomes of $40,000 or more per year (Table 9).

## Table 9
## Canadian GED Candidates, by Household Income

| | GED Candidates* | |
|---|---|---|
| Household Income** | Frequency | Percent |
| $9,999 and Under | 1,138 | 17 |
| $10,000–19,999 | 1,540 | 23 |
| $20,000–29,999 | 1,316 | 20 |
| $30,000–39,999 | 1,125 | 17 |
| $40,000 and Above | 1,563 | 23 |
| Total | 6,682 | 100 |

*Ontario and Quebec are not included.
**Income reported in Canadian dollars.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education.

# IV. Academic and Employment Goals

This section includes reasons for taking the tests, educational plans in the next year and employment plans in the next year.

## Reasons for Taking the Tests

- Nearly one in three (32 percent) reported taking the tests to be admitted to postsecondary education or training programs.
- Three in ten (29 percent) took the tests for employment-related reasons.
- More than one in four (27 percent) reported taking the tests to feel better about themselves.
- The remaining candidates took the GED Tests to help them become better educated (10 percent) or for other reasons (2 percent).

It is notable that candidates' reasons for taking the GED Tests were very similar in Canada and in the U.S. (Figure 3).

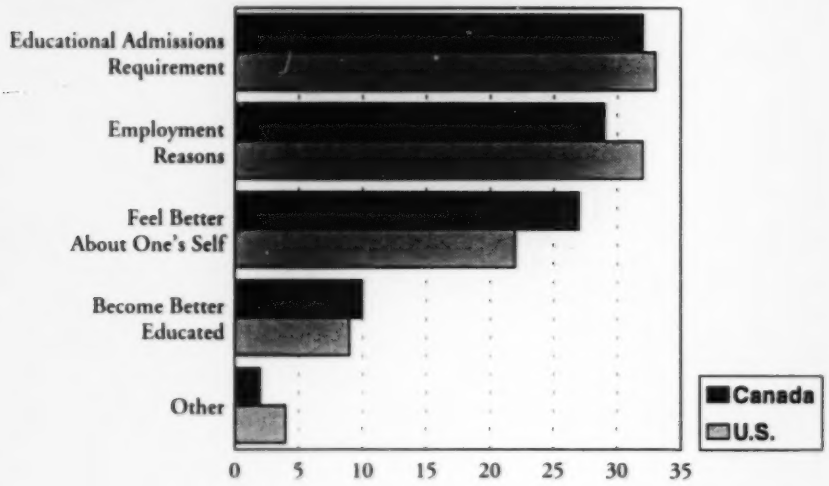
## Educational Plans During the Next Year

When the GED candidates were asked to report their educational plans during the next year, more than half (55 percent) responded that they planned to enroll in postsecondary education or training programs.

- One in three (33 percent) planned to enroll in a two-year or four-year college or university.
- One in five (22 percent) planned to enroll in a technical, trade, or vocational school.
- Nearly one in six (16 percent) planned to participate in on-the-job training programs.
- About 8 percent planned to study on their own.
- About 7 percent had no plans for further study after taking the GED Tests.

A large percentage of Canadian GED candidates (33 percent) planned to attend a two-year or four-year college or university. Anecdotal evidence suggests that acceptance of GED credentials by postsecondary education institutions is not as widespread in Canada as it is in the U.S. **It will be important to identify all Canadian educational institutions that accept persons with GED credentials so this information can be provided to candidates seeking to**

## Figure 3
## Candidates' Reasons for Taking the GED Tests in Canada and in the U.S., in Percents




Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada and 1989 National Candidate Survey, American Council on Education

continue their education beyond high school. Adult educators should provide information about the academic abilities of Canadian GED credential holders and admissions officers of college and universities throughout Canada. Such information may improve access to postsecondary education institutions for these adults.

### Employment Plans During the Next Year

- Three in ten (30 percent) candidates planned to get a job during the next year.
- Nearly one in five (19 percent) planned to change employers.
- About 15 percent reported that they planned to stay with their current employers, doing the same job; however, about 11 percent reported that they planned to get a better job, but with the same employer
- One in four (25 percent) planned to start their own business (5 percent), to join the military (1 percent), or none of these (19 percent).

Half of the GED candidates anticipated finding a new employer during the next year. One in four candidates (26 percent) planned to stay with their current employers, in the same or in a better job.

# V. Profile of the Typical Canadian GED Candidate

The typical candidate in Canada was White, about 30 years of age, had completed grade 10 or higher before leaving school, reported an annual household income of about $25,000, and planned to enroll in a postsecondary education or training program.

## Table 10
## Characteristics of Typical Canadian GED Candidates, by Gender

| Characteristic | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| Age | 63 percent were 25 to 44 years of age. | 63 percent were 20 to 34 years of age. |
| Race | 85 percent were White. | 87 percent were White. |
| Study Habits | 91 percent studied for the GED Tests. Of those who studied, 52 percent preferred formal methods, such as attending a GED review class. | 83 percent studied for the GED Tests. Of those who studied, 57 percent preferred informal methods, such as studying from a GED book or manual. |
| Highest Grade | 62 percent completed grade 10 or higher. | 63 percent completed grade 10 or higher. |
| Income* | 48 percent reported household incomes of less than $20,000 per year. | 48 percent reported household incomes of more than $30,000 per year. |
| Educational Plans | 34 percent planned to enroll in a community college during the next year. | 26 percent planned to enroll in a technical, trade, or vocational school during the next year. |

*Income reported in Canadian dollars.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, American Council on Education

Typical female candidates in Canada were White and between the ages of 25 and 44; had completed grade 10 or higher before leaving school; reported annual household income of less than $20,000; and planned community college after passing the GED Tests.

Typical male candidates in Canada were White and between the ages of 20 and 34; had completed grade 10 or higher before leaving school; reported annual household income of more than $30,000; and planned to enroll in a technical, trade, or vocational school after passing the GED Tests.

The characteristics of typical male and female GED candidates are summarized in Table 10.

# VI. Implications

According to the 1991 Canadian Census, in each jurisdiction in Canada at least one in every five adults is out of school and lacks a high school graduation certificate or further training. The percentage of adults without a high school credential in each jurisdiction ranged from a low of 22 percent (Yukon Territory) to a high of 42 percent (Newfoundland; Table 11). Many of these adults live in remote areas, work irregular hours, and have family or other circumstances that hinder their return to formal schooling. For such persons, distant learning opportunities, such as televised or videotaped instruction or other multimedia instructional strategies, may provide effective ways to improve their skills and knowledge. Adults who continue their learning through formal adult education classes, self study, distant learning programs, or other means can get credit for this learning by taking and passing the GED Tests.

Table 11
Percent of Canadian Population, Ages 15 and Older, Not Attending School and Lacking Secondary School Graduation Certificates or Further Training, by Jurisdiction

| | Population 15 Years and Older | | Population 15 Years and Older Without Certificate or Further Training | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jurisdiction | Frequency | Percent of Total | Frequency | Percent of Total | Percent of Population Without Certificate or Further Training |
| Ontario | 7,922,925 | 37.2 | 2,399,740 | 35.0 | 30.3 |
| Quebec | 5,433,240 | 25.5 | 1,880,525 | 26.3 | 34.6 |
| British Columbia | 2,585,530 | 12.1 | 745,970 | 10.9 | 28.9 |
| Alberta | 1,918,285 | 9.0 | 573,165 | 8.4 | 29.9 |
| Manitoba | 839,895 | 3.9 | 323,970 | 4.7 | 38.6 |
| Saskatchewan | 738,680 | 3.5 | 289,740 | 4.2 | 39.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 706,680 | 3.3 | 256,545 | 3.7 | 36.3 |
| New Brunswick | 565,320 | 2.6 | 218,190 | 3.2 | 38.6 |
| Newfoundland | 436,035 | 2.0 | 182,075 | 2.6 | 41.8 |
| Prince Edward Island | 98,750 | 0.5 | 36,590 | 0.5 | 37.1 |
| Northwest Territories | 38,555 | 0.2 | 14,520 | 0.2 | 37.7 |
| Yukon Territory | 20,850 | 0.1 | 4,595 | 0.1 | 22.0 |
| Total Without Ontario/Quebec | 7,948,580 | 37.2 | 2,645,360 | 38.5 | 33.3 |
| Total With Ontario/Quebec | 21,304,745 | 99.9 | 6,925,625 | 99.8 | 32.5 |

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Canadian Census, Cat. No. 93-328, Table 5

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# Appendix A: Names and Addresses of the Canadian GED Administrators

**Alberta**
Mr. Barry Krembil, Assistant Director
Student Evaluation Branch
Alberta Education
11160 Jasper Avenue, Box 43
Edmonton, AB T5K 0L2
(403) 427-0010

**British Columbia**
Ms. Becky Mathews, Director
Examinations Branch
Ministry of Education
Parliament Buildings
617 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8V 2M4
(604) 356-7269

**Manitoba**
Mr. Gerry Gros, Acting Director
Distance Education Program Unit
The Independent Study Program
555 Main Street
Winkler, MB R6W 1C4
(204) 325-2306

**New Brunswick (English-Language Edition)**
Mr. Peter Kilburn, Director
Curriculum and Evaluation Branch
Dept. of Advanced Education and Labour
PO Box 6000

**Newfoundland**
Mr. Leonard Badcock, Manager
High School Certification
Division of Program Development
Department of Education
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
(709) 729-2999

**Northwest Territories**
Ms. Bonnie Koslowski
Department of Education, Culture, and Employment Programs
Govt. of the Northwest Territories
Lahm Ridge Tower, 3rd Floor, Franklin Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9
(403) 920-6218

**Prince Edward Island**
Dr. Parnell Garland, Director
Educational Services
Department of Education and Human Resources
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7N8
(902) 368-4690

**Saskatchewan**
Mr. Wayne Eger
Department of Education, Training, and Employment
2220 College Avenue

**New Brunswick (French-Language Edition)**
Mr. Claude Savoie, Directeur
Direction de l'élaboration et de
l'évaluation des programmes
Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur
et du travaille
CP 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
(506) 453-8234

**Nova Scotia**
Mr. Turney C. Manzer, Assistant Director
Research, Testing and Evaluation
Department of Education
2021 Brunswick Street
PO Box 578
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
(902) 424-5805

**Yukon**
Ms. Hazel Fekete
Yukon College
Box 2799
White Horse, YK Y1A 5K4
(403) 668-8741

**Military**
Captain Pierre La Bonte
Canadian Forces
DPPS/NDHQ
234 Laurier Avenue
16th Floor, Export Building
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2
(613) 996-2429

# Appendix B: Methodology and Sample Evaluation

## Methodology

Each GED Administrator asked adults who wrote the Canadian edition of the GED Tests to complete the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Form, a four-page, scannable questionnaire (Appendix C). The questionnaire asked for information about examinees' background, education and schooling, reasons for dropping out of school, GED instruction, expectations regarding the GED Tests, employment, and income. The survey was administered to examinees at the testing site during pre-registration or on the date of testing either prior to or immediately following the test session.[1]

Survey results were compared to data based on the total GED population in Canada,[2] and the Canadian population of adults, not in school, without a secondary school credential or further training.[3] In the event that data for this particular population were not available, data for the total Canadian population were used.

The responses from 8,009 GED candidates were collected, scanned, and analyzed. Approximately 44 percent of the targeted population[4] of GED Candidates participated in the survey.

## Sample

The mean age of surveyed GED candidates in Canada was 30. As shown in Table B1, the age distribution of the surveyed GED candidates was nearly identical to that of the total population of GED candidates in Canada in 1992. More than six in 10 Canadian GED candidates were between the ages of 20 and 34 years (62 percent in the survey sample and 61 percent in the GED population).

Table B2 compares the numbers and percentages of candidates in the GED survey sample and the total GED candidate population by jurisdiction. The percentage of the target population in each jurisdiction is also presented.

The participation rates range from a low of 29 percent for Nova Scotia to a high of 100 percent for the Yukon Territory. New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island had very high participation rates (75 percent and 67 percent, respectively). The average participation rate for all jurisdictions was 44 percent, a very satisfactory rate for paper and pencil surveys.

[1] Participating examinees took the Canadian edition of the GED Tests, which are administered in ten participating provinces and territories in Canada. These tests differ from the U.S. editions in that the Canadian Social Studies Test was developed specifically for use in Canada and the Mathematics and Science Tests use metric nomenclature in the test questions.

[2] *The 1992 GED Statistical Report*, GED Testing Service, American Council on Education.

[3] Data from the 1991 Canada Census, Statistics Canada. Unless otherwise indicated, Ontario and Quebec are excluded from the Canadian population data.

[4] The target population is about 19,000, the estimated number of persons writing the GED Tests in ten Canadian jurisdictions during the ten-month survey administration period of September 1991 to June 1992. This number comprises one-third of the testing volume during 1991 (21,311) and one-half of the testing volume during 1992 (22,915).

Moreover, the relative proportions of candidates by jurisdiction in the survey sample were very similar to those in the GED population. Two exceptions to this generalization are New Brunswick, which is over-represented in the sample, and Nova Scotia, which is under-represented in the sample.

### Instrumentation

The Canadian survey questions used on the GED Candidate Survey Form were based on those used in the 1989 National Candidate Survey in the United States. Survey questions were revised in cooperation with Canadian GED Administrators in participating provinces and territories. This survey form is included in Appendix C. Additional information about how the survey was administered—letters to GED candidates and chief examiners, general information about the Canadian Survey, and instructions for administering the survey—is included in Appendix D.

## Table 12
## Canadian GED Candidate Sample and GED Population, by Age

| | Surveyed GED Candidates | | GED Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Frequency | Percent* | Frequency | Percent |
| 17 to 19 | 591 | 8 | 1,604 | 7 |
| 20 to 24 | 1,825 | 25 | 6,187 | 27 |
| 25 to 34 | 2,572 | 36 | 7,791 | 34 |
| 35 and older | 2,176 | 30 | 7,333 | 32 |
| Total | 7,164 | 99 | 22,915 | 100 |

*Due to rounding error, percent totals may not sum to 100.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada and 1992 GED Statistical Report (1993), American Council on Education.

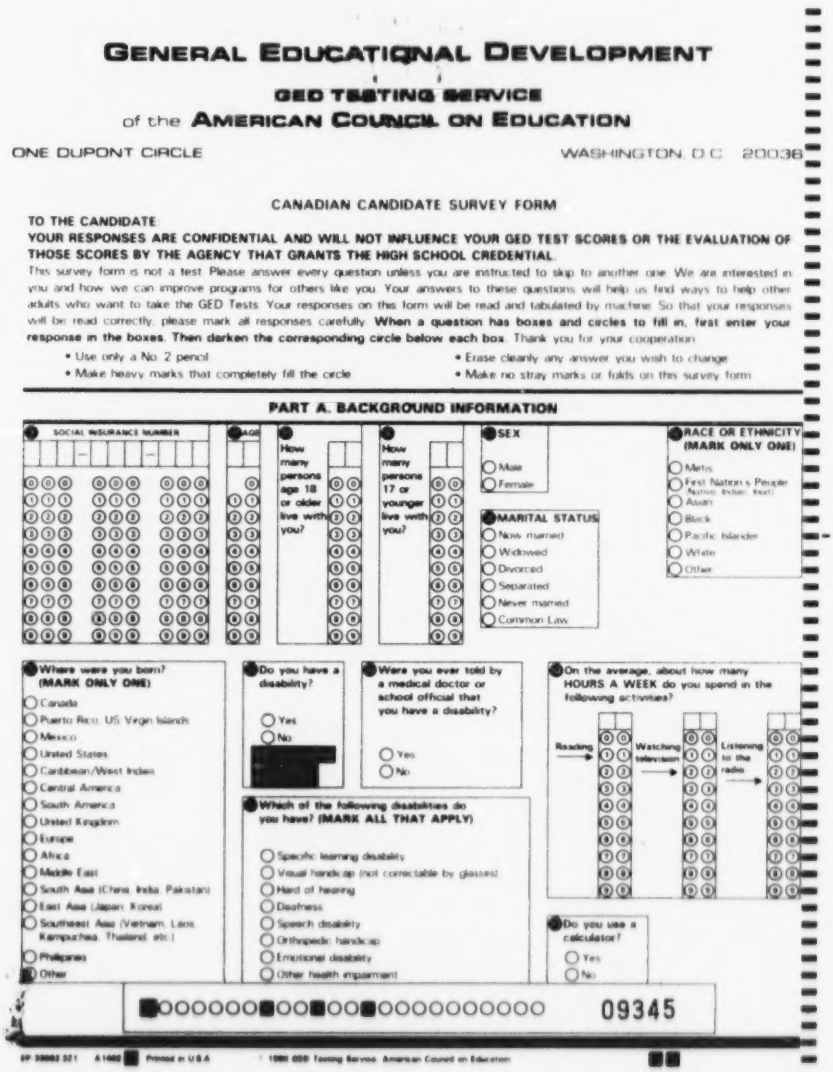
## Table 13
## Canadian GED Candidate Sample, GED Population, and GED Target Population, by Jurisdiction

| | GED Survey Sample | | GED Population | | Target Population | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jurisdiction | Frequency | Percent of Total* | Frequency | Percent of Total* | Frequency | Percent Surveyed |
| Alberta | 1,260 | 15.7 | 3,968 | 17.6 | 3,130 | 40.2 |
| British Columbia | 1,538 | 19.2 | 5,121 | 22.7 | 4,166 | 36.9 |
| Manitoba | 1,000 | 12.5 | 2,236 | 9.9 | 1,881 | 53.2 |
| New Brunswick | 1,323 | 16.5 | 2,047 | 9.1 | 1,767 | 74.9 |
| Newfoundland | 490 | 6.1 | 1,220 | 5.4 | 997 | 49.1 |
| North west Territories | 43 | 0.5 | 138 | 0.6 | 134 | 32.1 |
| Nova Scotia | 993 | 12.4 | 4,327 | 19.2 | 3,429 | 29.0 |
| Prince Edward Island | 166 | 2.1 | 301 | 1.3 | 248 | 66.9 |
| Saskatchewan | 1,144 | 14.3 | 3,188 | 14.1 | 2,534 | 45.1 |
| Yukon Territory | 52 | 0.6 | 55 | 0.2 | 52 | 100.0 |
| Total | 8,009 | 99.9 | 22,601 | 100.1 | 18,338 | 43.7 |

*Due to rounding error, percents may not sum to 100.

Source: 1992 Survey of GED Candidates in Canada, 1991 GED Statistical Report (1992), and 1992 GED Statistical Report (1993). GED Testing Service, American Council on Education.

# Appendix C: Canadian GED Candidate Survey Form



GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GED TESTING SERVICE

of the AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

ONE DUPONT CIRCLE WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

CANADIAN CANDIDATE SURVEY FORM

TO THE CANDIDATE:

**YOUR RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT INFLUENCE YOUR GED TEST SCORES OR THE EVALUATION OF THOSE SCORES BY THE AGENCY THAT GRANTS THE HIGH SCHOOL CREDENTIAL.**

This survey form is not a test. Please answer every question unless you are instructed to skip to another one. We are interested in you and how we can improve programs for others like you. Your answers to these questions will help us find ways to help other adults who want to take the GED Tests. Your responses on this form will be read and tabulated by machine. So that your responses will be read correctly, please mark all responses carefully. **When a question has boxes and circles to fill in, first enter your response in the boxes. Then darken the corresponding circle below each box.** Thank you for your cooperation.

- Use only a No. 2 pencil.
- Make heavy marks that completely fill the circle.
- Erase cleanly any answer you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks or folds on this survey form.

PART A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER

AGE

How many persons age 18 or older live with you?

How many persons 17 or younger live with you?

SEX
- Male
- Female

MARITAL STATUS
- Now married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married
- Common Law

RACE OR ETHNICITY (MARK ONLY ONE)
- Metis
- First Nation's People (Native Indian/Inuit)
- Asian
- Black
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Where were you born? (MARK ONLY ONE)
- Canada
- Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands
- Mexico
- United States
- Caribbean/West Indies
- Central America
- South America
- United Kingdom
- Europe
- Africa
- Middle East
- South Asia (China, India, Pakistan)
- East Asia (Japan, Korea)
- Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Thailand, etc.)
- Philipines
- Other

Do you have a disability?
- Yes
- No

Were you ever told by a medical doctor or school official that you have a disability?
- Yes
- No

Which of the following disabilities do you have? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)
- Specific learning disability
- Visual handicap (not correctable by glasses)
- Hard of hearing
- Deafness
- Speech disability
- Orthopedic handicap
- Emotional disability
- Other health impairment

On the average, about how many HOURS A WEEK do you spend in the following activities?

Reading | Watching television | Listening to the radio

Do you use a calculator?
- Yes
- No

09345

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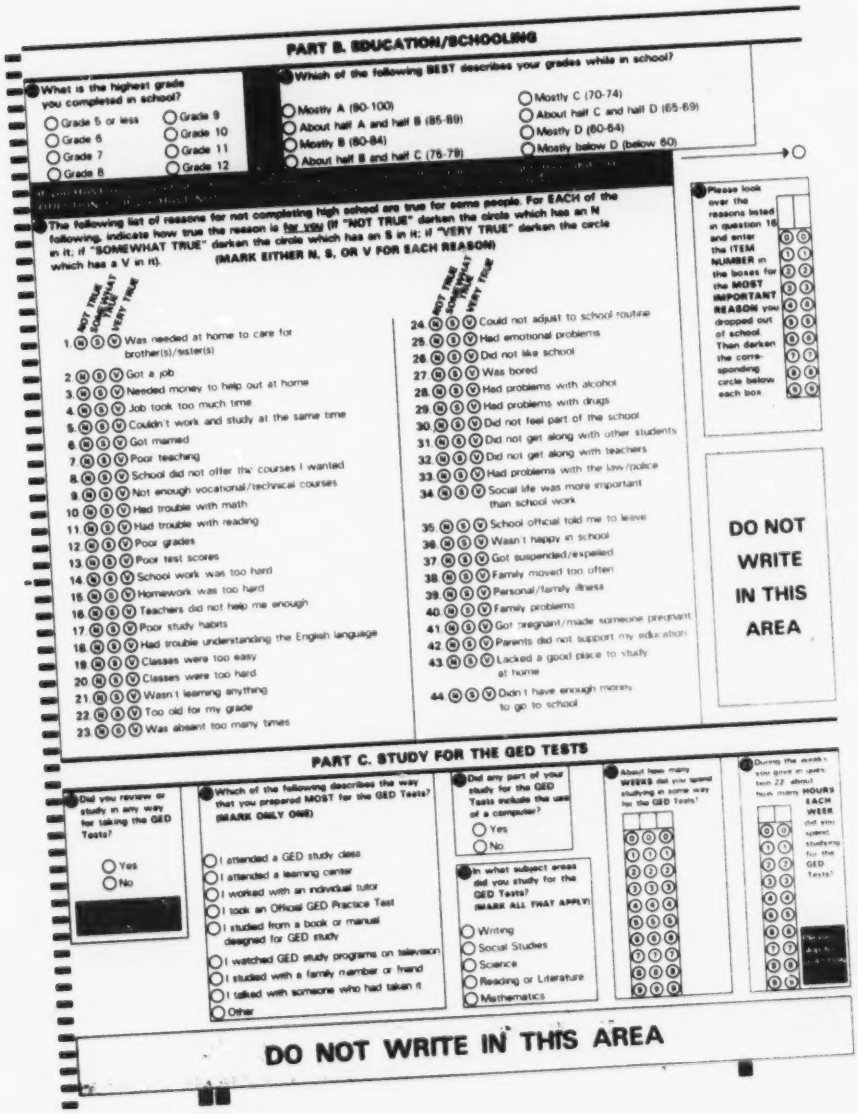


## PART B. EDUCATION/SCHOOLING

**What is the highest grade you completed in school?**

- Grade 5 or less
- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

**Which of the following BEST describes your grades while in school?**

- Mostly A (90-100)
- About half A and half B (85-89)
- Mostly B (80-84)
- About half B and half C (75-79)
- Mostly C (70-74)
- About half C and half D (65-69)
- Mostly D (60-64)
- Mostly below D (below 60)

**The following list of reasons for not completing high school are true for some people. For EACH of the following, indicate how true the reason is for you (If "NOT TRUE" darken the circle which has an N in it; if "SOMEWHAT TRUE" darken the circle which has an S in it; if "VERY TRUE" darken the circle which has a V in it). (MARK EITHER N, S, OR V FOR EACH REASON)**

NOT TRUE / SOMEWHAT TRUE / VERY TRUE

1. Was needed at home to care for brother(s)/sister(s)
2. Got a job
3. Needed money to help out at home
4. Job took too much time
5. Couldn't work and study at the same time
6. Got married
7. Poor teaching
8. School did not offer the courses I wanted
9. Not enough vocational/technical courses
10. Had trouble with math
11. Had trouble with reading
12. Poor grades
13. Poor test scores
14. School work was too hard
15. Homework was too hard
16. Teachers did not help me enough
17. Poor study habits
18. Had trouble understanding the English language
19. Classes were too easy
20. Classes were too hard
21. Wasn't learning anything
22. Too old for my grade
23. Was absent too many times
24. Could not adjust to school routine
25. Had emotional problems
26. Did not like school
27. Was bored
28. Had problems with alcohol
29. Had problems with drugs
30. Did not feel part of the school
31. Did not get along with other students
32. Did not get along with teachers
33. Had problems with the law/police
34. Social life was more important than school work
35. School official told me to leave
36. Wasn't happy in school
37. Got suspended/expelled
38. Family moved too often
39. Personal/family illness
40. Family problems
41. Got pregnant/made someone pregnant
42. Parents did not support my education
43. Lacked a good place to study at home
44. Didn't have enough money to go to school

**Please look over the reasons listed in question 18 and enter the ITEM NUMBER in the boxes for the MOST IMPORTANT REASON you dropped out of school. Then darken the corresponding circle below each box.**

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

## PART C. STUDY FOR THE GED TESTS

**Did you review or study in any way for taking the GED Tests?**

- Yes
- No

**Which of the following describes the way that you prepared MOST for the GED Tests? (MARK ONLY ONE)**

- I attended a GED study class
- I attended a learning center
- I worked with an individual tutor
- I took an Official GED Practice Test
- I studied from a book or manual designed for GED study
- I watched GED study programs on television
- I studied with a family member or friend
- I talked with someone who had taken it
- Other

**Did any part of your study for the GED Tests include the use of a computer?**

- Yes
- No

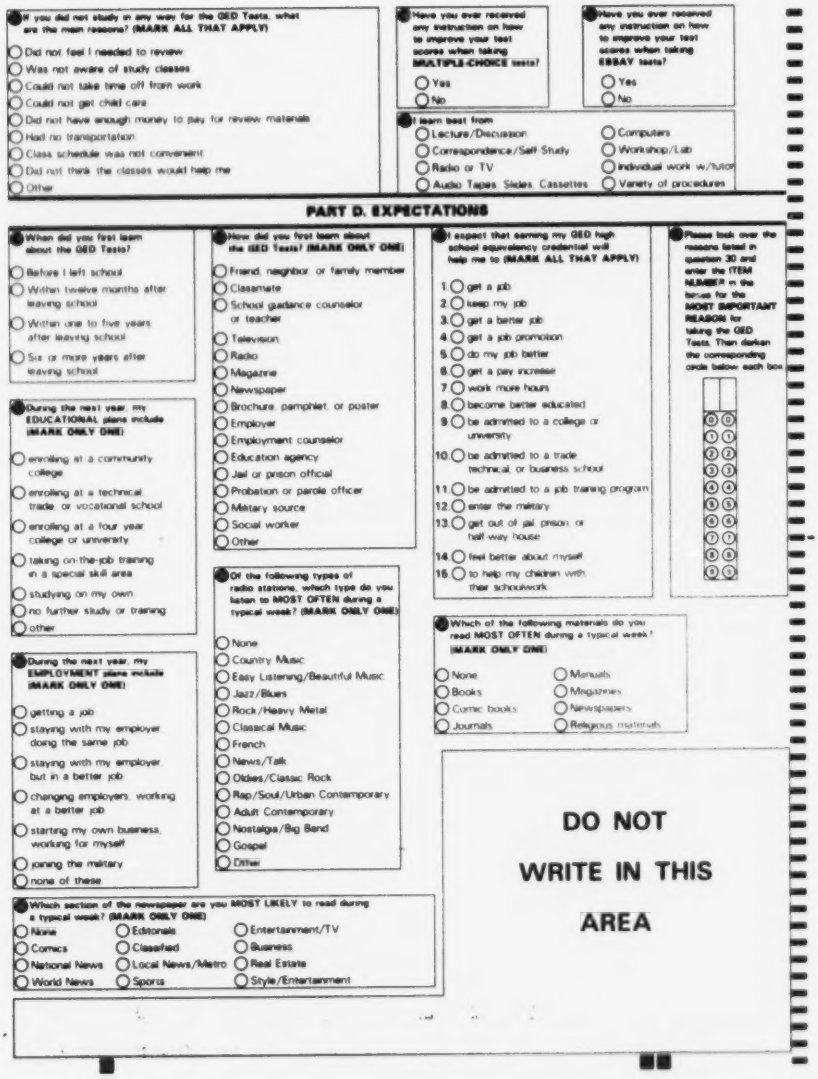
**In what subject areas did you study for the GED Tests? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Writing
- Social Studies
- Science
- Reading or Literature
- Mathematics

**About how many WEEKS did you spend studying in some way for the GED Tests?**

**During the weeks you gave in item 22, about how many HOURS EACH WEEK did you spend studying for the GED Tests?**

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



If you did not study in any way for the GED Tests, what are the main reasons? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Did not feel I needed to review
- Was not aware of study classes
- Could not take time off from work
- Could not get child care
- Did not have enough money to pay for review materials
- Had no transportation
- Class schedule was not convenient
- Did not think the classes would help me
- Other

Have you ever received any instruction on how to improve your test scores when taking MULTIPLE-CHOICE tests?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever received any instruction on how to improve your test scores when taking ESSAY tests?

- Yes
- No

I learn best from

- Lecture/Discussion
- Correspondence/Self-Study
- Radio or TV
- Audio Tapes, Slides, Cassettes
- Computers
- Workshop/Lab
- Individual work w/tutor
- Variety of procedures

## PART D. EXPECTATIONS

When did you first learn about the GED Tests?

- Before I left school
- Within twelve months after leaving school
- Within one to five years after leaving school
- Six or more years after leaving school

During the next year, my EDUCATIONAL plans include (MARK ONLY ONE)

- enrolling at a community college
- enrolling at a technical, trade, or vocational school
- enrolling at a four year college or university
- taking on-the-job training in a special skill area
- studying on my own
- no further study or training
- other

During the next year, my EMPLOYMENT plans include (MARK ONLY ONE)

- getting a job
- staying with my employer doing the same job
- staying with my employer but in a better job
- changing employers, working at a better job
- starting my own business, working for myself
- joining the military
- none of these

How did you first learn about the GED Tests? (MARK ONLY ONE)

- Friend, neighbor, or family member
- Classmate
- School guidance counselor or teacher
- Television
- Radio
- Magazine
- Newspaper
- Brochure, pamphlet, or poster
- Employer
- Employment counselor
- Education agency
- Jail or prison official
- Probation or parole officer
- Military source
- Social worker
- Other

Of the following types of radio stations, which type do you listen to MOST OFTEN during a typical week? (MARK ONLY ONE)

- None
- Country Music
- Easy Listening/Beautiful Music
- Jazz/Blues
- Rock/Heavy Metal
- Classical Music
- French
- News/Talk
- Oldies/Classic Rock
- Rap/Soul/Urban Contemporary
- Adult Contemporary
- Nostalgia/Big Band
- Gospel
- Other

I expect that earning my GED high school equivalency credential will help me to (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)

1. get a job
2. keep my job
3. get a better job
4. get a job promotion
5. do my job better
6. get a pay increase
7. work more hours
8. become better educated
9. be admitted to a college or university
10. be admitted to a trade, technical, or business school
11. be admitted to a job training program
12. enter the military
13. get out of jail, prison, or half-way house
14. feel better about myself
15. to help my children with their schoolwork

Please look over the reasons listed in question 30 and enter the ITEM NUMBER in the boxes for the MOST IMPORTANT REASON for taking the GED Tests. Then darken the corresponding circle below each box.

Which of the following materials do you read MOST OFTEN during a typical week? (MARK ONLY ONE)

- None
- Books
- Comic books
- Journals
- Manuals
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Religious materials

Which section of the newspaper are you MOST LIKELY to read during a typical week? (MARK ONLY ONE)

- None
- Comics
- National News
- World News
- Editorials
- Classified
- Local News/Metro
- Sports
- Entertainment/TV
- Business
- Real Estate
- Style/Entertainment

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

## PART E. EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

**I am CURRENTLY (MARK ONLY ONE AND FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BESIDE IT)**

- NOT employed and NOT looking for a job
- employed but NOT FOR PAY
- employed for PAY
- NOT employed, but looking for a job

**If you are NOT employed, and NOT looking for a job, what are the reasons? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Taking care of home or family
- Ill or disabled
- Going to school
- Can't find work
- Don't want to work
- Retired
- Have other sources of income
- Institutionalized (in hospital, prison)

**How many HOURS A WEEK do you usually work?**

- 1–14
- 15–34
- 35+

**What are the sources of income for all people living in your household, not just you? (MARK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- My job or self-employment
- My job training or work experience program
- Job of family or other household member
- Savings
- Unemployment insurance
- Income assistance
- Family allowance
- Pensions
- Other retirement income
- Veterans benefits
- Income from assets (rent, royalties) and investments
- Other source
- No household income

**Please select ONE of the following categories which best describes your CURRENT or MOST RECENT job. If you have more than one job, indicate the kind of job for which you work the MOST HOURS.**

- **Never worked**
- **Administrative support, including clerical** (such as computer operator, information clerk, news or mail carrier, secretary, office supervisor)
- **Private household** (such as butler, maid, housekeeper, launderer, child care worker)
- **Protective service** (such as detective, guard, fire fighter)
- **Other service** (such as cook, custodian, waiter/waitress)
- **Farming, forestry, and fishing** (such as farmer, farm manager or supervisor, farm worker, gardener, groundskeeper, fisher, hunter)
- **Precision production, craft and repair** (such as blester, dressmaker, insulation worker, butcher, mechanic, repairer)
- **Machine operator, assembler, and inspector** (such as printing machine operator, typesetter, welder, product inspector)
- **Transportation and material moving** (such as motor vehicle operator, bus, truck, or taxicab driver, railroad conductor, tractor operator)
- **Handler, equipment cleaner, and laborer** (such as construction laborer, freight or stock handler, bagger, sanitation worker)
- **Military service member** (such as career officer, enlisted person)
- **Proprietor, owner** (such as owner of small business, contractor)
- **Executive, administrative, and managerial** (such as accountant, auditor, buyer, finance personnel or public relations manager)
- **Professional specialty** (such as artist, engineer, musician, teacher, social worker, writer)
- **Technicians and related support** (such as computer programmer, dental hygienist, legal assistant, practical nurse)
- **Sales** (such as cashier, insurance or real estate representative, retail or wholesale sales worker)
- **Homemaker**
- **Other**

**During the last 12 months, what is the combined income of all members of your household? (MARK ONLY ONE)**

- Less than $10,000 a year
- Between $10,000 and $20,000 a year
- Between $20,000 and $30,000 a year
- Between $30,000 and $40,000 a year
- More than $40,000 a year

**Thank you for answering these questions. Because our interest in you extends beyond the time you complete the test, the GED Testing Service may wish to contact you once within the next 18 months regarding your attitudes and opinions about your GED experience and other related topics. We will do so, however, only if you check "YES" and give your address below. (YOU WILL BE CONTACTED ONLY ONCE)**

- Yes, the GED Testing Service may contact me for a follow-up study

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____
Street number Street Apt #

City Province/Territory Postal Code

**If GEDTS is unable to locate me, the person below will always know how to contact me.**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____
Street number Street Apt #

City Province/Territory Postal Code

09345

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

GED Testing Service
American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

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# Appendix D: Survey Administration Information

**The General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education**

August 20, 1991

Mr. Peter Kilburn
Director, Curriculum and Evaluation Branch
Department of Advanced Education and Training
416 York Street, PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Peter:

Enclosed are ten sets of candidate survey administration documents that I have revised for use in Canada. Each GED Administrator may wish to revise these documents further to suit individual provincial circumstances. An alternative to revising these documents is for each province to prepare a letter to Chief Examiners alerting them to particular revisions in procedures or information. The documents are as follows:

1. *General Information About the Canadian GED Candidate Survey.* This information sheet describes the nature of the study and suggests the kinds of policy information the survey is expected to provide. It is particularly useful to address inquiries from the public and from public policy decision makers.

2. Letter from me to Chief Examiners (September 1991). This letter accompanies the document described in No. 3.

3. *General Information for Chief Examiners About the Canadian GED Candidate Survey.* This describes in some detail what the survey is about and contains important information for Chief Examiners about the survey. There is a paragraph on the second page about the social insurance number. If needed, this paragraph could be omitted before sending this to the Chief Examiners.

4. *Incident Report Form.* This form should be filled out and included with each mailing of Canadian Candidate survey forms to GEDTS. This form permits us to do two things: one, determine when unexpected events occur which may adversely affect the quality of the survey responses; and two, track the survey participation rate of

adults who take the GED Tests. The better the participation rate, the more representative the study will be of each province in Canada. I am aiming for 100 percent! I know this may be unrealistically high, but the quality of the study is directly related to getting a good rate of participation. So let's aim high! Each Provincial GED Administrator should photocopy ten copies of this form to cover the ten-month survey period.

5. Memo to Canadian Chief Examiners from me. This memo accompanies the document described in No. 6.

6. *Instructions for Administering the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Forms.* This document contains important information about how the survey should be administered.

7. Dear GED Candidate Letter from Jean Lowe. This letter explains the study to each examinee and thanks them for participating.

I hope this information is helpful, Peter. Please call me if you have questions (202/939-9490). And good luck!

Sincerely,

Janet Baldwin
Assistant Director for Policy Research

JB/dll
Enclosures

## General Information About the Canadian GED Candidate Survey

How many examinees completed GED classes before taking the GED Tests? What proportion of the GED examinees in the Canadian provinces report having a disability? How did most examinees learn about the GED Tests? These and many other questions will be answered by the results from the Canadian GED Candidate Survey, a research project of the GED Testing Service and Ministries of Adult Education in participating provinces. The Canadian GED Candidate Survey is the first survey of GED examinees in Canada ever conducted. From this research study, we will learn about the background characteristics, interests, attitudes, and expectations of adults who take the GED Tests, a diverse population about whom relatively little is known. Learning more about these adults will help us improve our services for all GED examinees. In addition, the information from this survey will help GED Chief Examiners, provincial Ministers of Education, GED Administrators, and GED teachers find more effective ways to reach and recruit adults and to help them meet their educational and employment goals.

Between September 1991 and June 1992, the General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) will conduct a national survey of adults who take the Canadian Edition of the GED Tests. All Official GED Testing Centers and test administration sites are being asked to participate in this important research study.

Adults taking the GED Tests will be asked to complete a four page scannable questionnaire. The questionnaire asks for information about examinees' background, education and schooling, reasons for dropping out of school, GED instruction, expectations regarding the GED Tests, and employment and income.

The information obtained from the responses of adults to the Canadian GED Candidate Survey will support policy decisions at the federal, province, and local levels. For example:

- Understanding the kinds of reasons adults give for having dropped out of school provides support for policies designed to tailor instruction to special needs and improve quality of schooling for at-risk students.
- Analysis of the background characteristics, educational experiences, and goals of minorities and women can provide insights into the abilities and needs of these groups, enabling educational and public policy decision makers to target resources more effectively to these adult populations.
- Knowing how many examinees undertake study programs to prepare for the GED Tests, and what kinds of study programs are most often selected, can lead to the development of improved materials and programs in basic and intermediate skills for adult learners.
- Learning what proportion of GED examinees report having a handicapping condition can signal to policy makers in adult and special education the nature and scope of special education needs in the population of adults who seek a high school diploma through the GED Tests.
- With increasing attention given to the quality and quantity of the workforce in the coming decades, knowledge about the kinds of jobs, hours worked, and levels of income of adults taking the GED Tests will highlight the economic contributions of this important but little known segment of the adult population.

- A description of the academic background and educational goals of adults who take the GED Tests will inform decisions regarding recruitment, counseling, and placement of adults in adult education and postsecondary education programs.

If you have any general questions about the Canadian GED Candidate Survey, please call Janet Baldwin or Debra Louallen at 202/939-9490.

**The General Educational Testing Service of the American Council on Education**

September 1991

Dear Chief Examiner:

The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) and provincial Ministries of Adult Education will conduct a national survey of GED Candidates in Canada during 1991 and 1992. The Canadian GED Candidate Survey is the first survey of GED examinees in Canada ever conducted. You may recall that a 1980 survey of U.S. Candidates resulted in the GEDTS report, *Who Takes the GED Tests?* (GEDTS, 1981). The Canadian survey will tell us about the background characteristics, interests, attitudes, and experiences of adults who take the GED Tests in Canada. Learning more about these adults will help us improve our services for all GED examinees. In addition, the information from this survey will help GED Chief Examiners, provincial Ministers of Education, GED Administrators, and GED teachers find more effective ways to reach and recruit adults and to help them meet their educational and employment goals. For a detailed description of the study, please refer to the attached General Information Sheet for Chief Examiners.

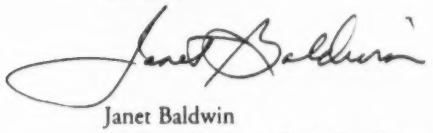
The Canadian GED Candidate Survey will be administered in all Official GED Testing Centers and testing sites in Canada. All GED examinees who are tested between September 1, 1991 and June 30, 1992 will participate in this survey.

Because you provide the all-important link between the GED Testing Service and the GED examinees, we are counting on your help in gaining the cooperation of GED candidates and in obtaining high quality research data. Here are some things we would like you to do:

- Read the *General Information Sheet for GED Examiners* and contact the GED Administrator in your province if you have any questions about this research project.
- Inform all GED examinees who are scheduled to take the GED Tests between September 1991 and June 1992 that they will be asked to complete the Canadian GED Candidate Survey when they arrive for testing. The survey form should take about 20 minutes to complete. You may administer the survey forms at the time of registration for the test, just prior to testing, or immediately following testing, whichever is more convenient.
- **Strongly encourage all examinees to complete the survey.** All examinee responses to questions on the Canadian GED Candidate Survey will be kept confidential. Although participation is voluntary, please emphasize the importance of this national study and encourage them to answer each question as accurately as they can.

Thank you for your cooperation in the Canadian GED Candidate Survey. Please contact me personally if you have any questions or comments you care to make about this project. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Janet Baldwin
Assistant Director for Policy Research

Enclosures

## General Information for Chief Examiners About the Canadian GED Candidate Survey

How many examinees completed GED classes before taking the GED Tests? What proportion of the GED examinees in Canada report having a disability? How did most examinees learn about the GED Tests? These and many other questions will be answered by the results from the Canadian GED Candidate Survey, a research project of the GED Testing Service and Departments of Education in participating provinces. The Canadian GED Candidate Survey is the first survey of GED examinees in Canada ever conducted. From this research study, we will learn about the background characteristics, interests, attitudes, and expectations of adults who take the GED Tests, a diverse population about whom relatively little is known. Learning more about these adults will help us improve our services for all GED examinees. In addition, the information from this survey will help GED Chief Examiners, provincial Ministers of Education, GED Administrators, and GED teachers find more effective ways to reach and recruit adults and to help them meet their educational and employment goals.

Between September 1, 1991, and June 30, 1992, the General Educational Development Testing Service (GEDTS) will conduct a national survey of adults who take the Canadian Edition of the GED Tests. Every testing center and testing site is being asked to participate in this important research study. These centers will administer the Canadian GED Candidate Survey to all examinees who take the GED Tests during the 1991–1992 survey research period this fall.

Examinees will need about 20 minutes to complete a four page scannable questionnaire. The questionnaire asks for information about examinees' background, education and schooling, attitudes toward schooling and testing, GED instruction, expectations regarding the GED Tests, and employment and income. Chief Examiners should plan to inform all GED examinees who are scheduled to take the GED Tests between September 1, 1991, and June 30, 1992, that they will be asked to complete the Canadian GED Candidate Survey when they arrive for testing. The survey may be administered at the time of registration for testing, just prior to testing, or immediately following testing, whichever is more convenient. Through appropriate advance notice and preparation, examinees should arrive at your testing center expecting to participate in this important national study.

The GED Administrator in each province will mail the Canadian GED Candidate Survey forms and instructions for administering the survey to Chief Examiners in September of 1991.

To maintain the confidentiality of the examinee's responses to the survey questions:

- All completed survey forms must be handled as secure test materials because they contain personal information.
- Completed survey forms and materials may not be removed from the premises of the GED Testing Center (or administration site) except for return to the GED Testing Service.

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- The Chief Examiner should look over the completed survey forms to ensure that the examinee's social insurance number is marked correctly. If the examinee does not have a social insurance number, leave the spaces blank. If the number has been written in the boxes above the grid, please fill in the corresponding bubbles in the appropriate columns. Although optional, the social insurance number is requested **for research purposes only** in order to link an examinee's survey responses with his or her GED test data. All survey and test results of individual examinees will remain confidential. No individual results will be reported.

- Each month, the Chief Examiner should mail the completed survey forms to:

  GED Testing Service
  ATTN: Patricia H. Jones
  One Dupont Circle, Suite 250
  Washington, DC 20036-1193.

  The mail envelope or package must be clearly marked with the name and address of the provincial GED Testing Center or testing site.

Each provincial GED Administrator will deliver survey forms to each test administration site. If you have any general questions about the 1989 National Candidate Survey, please call Debra Louallen or Patricia H. Jones at 202/939-9490, or the GED Administrator in your province.

## Canadian GED Candidate Survey
## Incident Report Form

Testing Center Name _____

Administration Date _____

1. How many examinees completed the survey? _____

2. If some students did *not* complete the survey, how many did not? _____

What were the reasons? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Please note in the space below any incidents which occurred during the administration of this survey which could affect the ability of the examinees to respond accurately to the questions. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Please make any comments or suggestions which you think will help us improve the administration of future surveys. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Chief Examiner Signature _____

Province Name _____

**The General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education**

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 1991

TO: Canadian Chief Examiners

FROM: Janet Baldwin

SUBJECT: Canadian GED Candidate Survey

The enclosed materials include the specific instructions for administering the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Form to every GED Candidate who takes one or more GED Tests in your Testing Center between September 1, 1991, and June 30, 1992. These instructions must be followed carefully to ensure that the information from your center can be included in reports of national results from Canada. The survey asks examinees about their educational background, schooling, their reasons for taking the GED Tests, ways they studied for the tests, and employment and income.

The actual questionnaire forms you will use will be mailed to you by the GED Administrator in your province. These survey forms are four pages long and will be in a "machine scannable" format. Because the forms will be scored by machine, it is very important that GED candidates fill them out carefully and completely with a #2 pencil. Because the survey takes about 20 minutes to complete, your basic Testing Center operations should not be affected. Only aggregated information will be reported from the study and no individual candidate information will be identified.

By becoming familiar with the nature of the study and how to administer the survey form, you can help to ensure that GED candidates are motivated to participate in this important project. For your information, the enclosed sheet, *General Information for Chief Examiners About the Canadian GED Candidate Survey*, describes the purposes of the study and gives you an idea of the kind of questions which will be asked.

Please read carefully the *Instructions for Administering the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Forms*. We have tried to anticipate your questions in preparing these instructions. However, if you have any additional questions, please contact your provincial GED Administror, or call Debra Louallen, Patricia Jones, or Janet Baldwin at 202/939-9490. Thank you for your valuable assistance!

## Instructions for Administering the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Forms

### What the GED Testing Service Expects from Chief Examiners

It is expected that the Chief Examiner of each testing center will see that the survey form is administered to each candidate tested during the survey period. In addition, all completed survey forms are to be collected and mailed *each month* to the GED Testing Service. You should keep all survey forms in a secure place until ready to mail each month to the GED Testing Service. The package (or boxes) of survey forms should be clearly marked with your testing center name and address, *including province name.*

### Who Should be Asked to Complete the Survey Form?

*All* GED candidates tested from September 1991 through June 1992 should be encouraged to complete the survey. This includes persons who are being retested as well as those who are taking any of the tests for the first time. Although participation is voluntary, the usefulness of the information we obtain depends on getting accurate responses and a very high response rate. We are seeking a 100 percent response rate from your center! Please encourage candidates to complete the survey!

### When Should the Survey Form be Administered?

Depending upon circumstances, candidates may complete the survey either: during a GED pre-registration period; on the date of testing; before the test session begins; immediately after the test session ends; or between tests if the candidate completes a test prior to the specified time. Please do not permit candidates to complete them at home after the testing session—even if they promise to return or mail them. If the candidate returns for additional testing during the September 1991–June 1992 survey research period, he or she should *not* be asked to complete a second survey form.

### How Should the Survey Form be Administered and Completed?

Distribute to each examinee a copy of the letter to the GED Candidate and a copy of the Canadian GED Candidate Survey Form. The following statement should be read to all candidates before they begin the survey:

*"You are being asked to participate in the Canadian GED Candidate Survey. Please read carefully the letter that accompanies the survey form. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but we would like everyone to participate. Answer each question as accurately as you can. It should take only about 20 minutes to answer these questions. Your responses will remain strictly confidential."*

Because the information from the survey will be machine scored, candidates must use a #2 pencil to completely fill in the appropriate circles. Please encourage candidates to print or write clearly in answering the questions that call for written responses.



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## Who Should Administer Survey Forms?

The survey should be administered by the person who normally administers the GED Tests. It is important that the person who administers the survey be knowledgeable about the project, understand the importance of test and survey form security, have a friendly and encouraging manner, and follow our instructions for introducing the survey.

## What Should I Do with the Completed Survey Forms During This Period?

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the examinee's responses to the survey questions, the following procedures must be followed:

1) All completed survey forms must be handled as secure test materials because they contain personal information.

2) Completed survey forms and materials may not be removed from the premises of the testing center or administration site except for return to the GED Testing Service.

3) The completed questionnaires must be stored in a locked file cabinet or safe accessible only to the Chief Examiner and Alternate Chief Examiner. They must not be stored in a location accessible by other staff members.

4) The Chief Examiner should look over the completed survey forms to ensure that the candidate's social insurance number is marked correctly. If the candidate does not have a social insurance number, leave the spaces blank. If the number has been written in the boxes above the grid, please fill in the corresponding bubbles in the appropriate columns. ***The social insurance number is optional.*** It is requested for research purposes only in order to link a candidate's survey responses with his or her GED test data. All survey and test results of individual examinees will remain confidential. You will receive an Incident Report Form with your supply of survey forms. If there are any incidents which occur during the administration of this survey which could upset or distract the examinees, please note them on the Incident Report Form. You should include this form with the completed surveys you return to GED Testing Service each month. You may use this form to make any other comments or suggestions which you think will help us improve the administration of future surveys.

## How and When Should the Completed Survey Forms be Returned to the GED Testing Service?

*All* survey forms completed by GED candidates between September 1, 1991 and June 30, 1992 must be returned to the GED Testing Service ***at the end of each month.*** Place all completed questionnaires in an envelope or package which is clearly marked with the testing center's return address. Send the survey forms (and Incident Report Forms) to:

Canadian GED Candidate Survey
ATTN: Patricia H. Jones
GED Testing Service
One Dupont Circle, Suite 250
Washington, DC 20036-1163

**The General Educational Development Testing Service**
**of the American Council on Education**

September, 1991

Dear GED Candidate:

The GED Testing Program has grown considerably during the past decade. In 1990, more than 21,000 adults took the GED Tests in Canada. Persons like you who attempt to qualify for a high school credential based on GED Tests results are an important segment of the Canadian educational system. To improve the program, we need to know more about you. By completing this survey form, you are contributing valuable information about adults who are taking the GED Tests in order to earn a high school diploma. This information will provide insight into the wide range of experiences reflected in your background and how they may be related to your test results. Learning more about the adults who complete this survey will help us to improve our services for all GED candidates and to help adults meet their educational and employment goals.

All adults tested at GED Testing Centers throughout Canada during 1991 and 1992 will be asked to participate in this survey. Although participation is voluntary, it is *very important* that you participate in the Canadian GED Candidate Survey. Please follow the directions carefully, and answer each question as honestly as you can. Your responses will remain strictly confidential. Your completed survey will be sent directly to our office for analysis and results will be reported only for groups. No individual results will be reported and your answers will not affect your test results.

Thank you for participating in the Canadian GED Candidate Survey!

Cordially,

Jean H. Lowe
Director

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